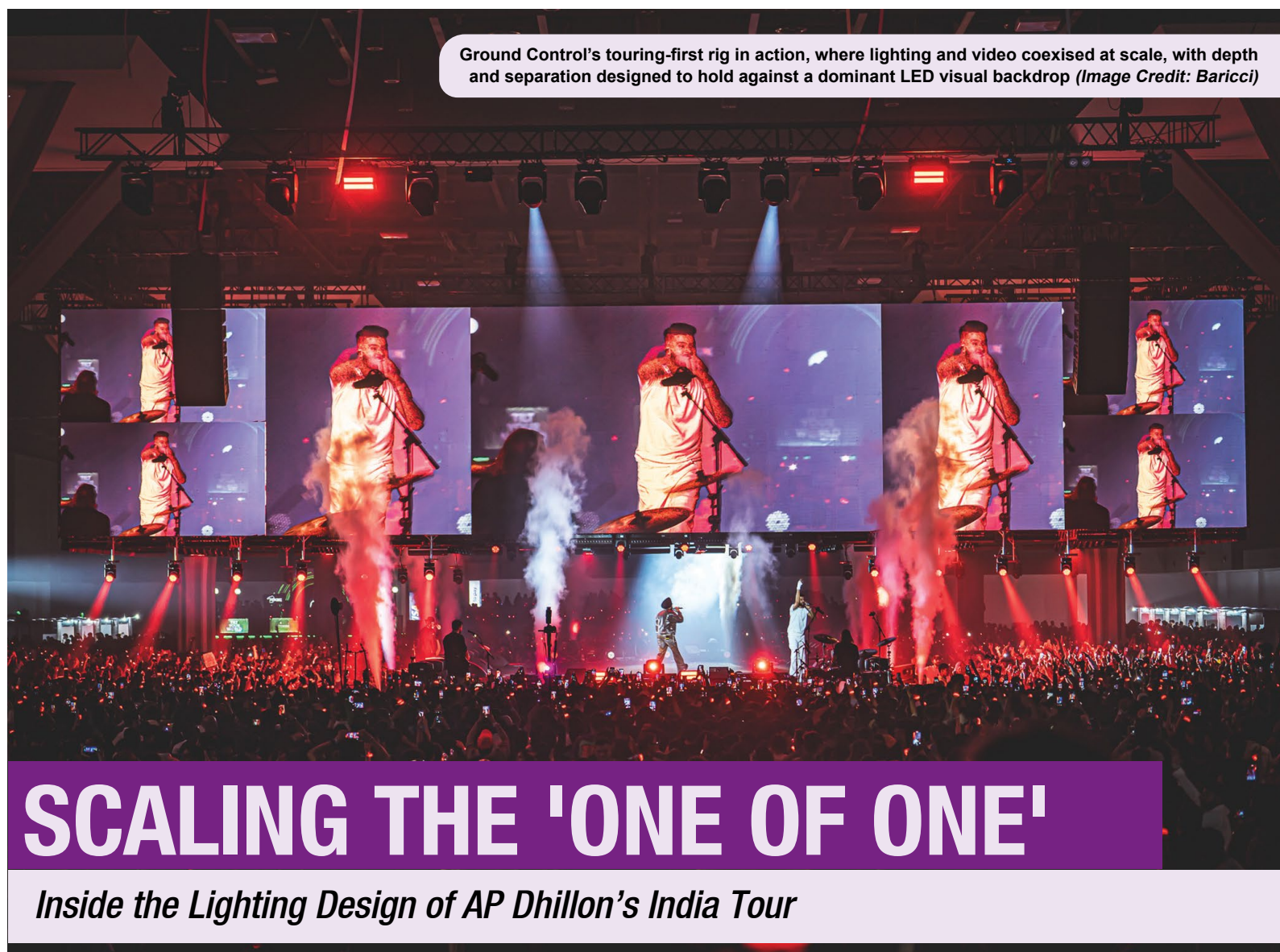


## LIGHTING DESIGN: CONCERT TOUR

*AP Dhillon's 'One of One' India tour signalled a step change in the way large format touring productions are planned, designed, and executed domestically. With audience capacities ranging from 10,000 to 12,000 across most cities, and climbing close to 20,000 in Mumbai and Delhi, the tour demanded a lighting system that could deliver both scale and control, while remaining consistent across vastly different venues. Rather than adapting designs reactively city by city, the production travelled with a largely standardised lighting inventory and rig architecture. PALM Expo Magazine speaks to **Naveen Deshpande** and **Satvinder Singh** to go behind the scenes as they created this lumière production for one of the biggest acts of 2025!*



For **Ground Control**, one of India's foremost lighting design companies, the tour represented a deliberate shift toward a touring first lighting design methodology. As **Naveen Deshpande**, Lighting Director, explains, "It was a proper plug and play setup. We travelled with the same rig and inventory across cities, apart from the larger shows." The emphasis on pre addressed, pre labelled systems allowed the team to reduce on site build time significantly and maintain predictable results under tight schedules.

This approach was also aligned with a broader operational objective. The team consciously worked toward greater efficiency and reduced redundancy, an increasingly relevant consideration for large scale touring in India.

### Timecode as the Creative Backbone

A defining feature of the **One of One** tour was the decision to run the lighting fully timecoded from start to finish — not selectively, but across

the entire set. While partial timecoding had been used on earlier tours, this production marked a full commitment to a locked show workflow.

Deshpande notes, "Earlier, we'd only used timecode in parts of the set, but this time the idea was to have the entire show locked from the intro all the way through."

This choice enabled the lighting, video, and music to operate as a unified system, ensuring that every visual cue landed precisely on musical moments, regardless of venue or city. Consistency, rather than improvisation, became the defining aesthetic.

### Restrained Yet Purposeful Visual Language

Rather than overwhelming audiences with constant motion or layered effects, the lighting design was rooted in restraint and emphasis. **Satvinder Singh**, Lead Programmer, describes the approach as one that prioritised



**A standardised, timecoded lighting rig travelled with AP Dhillon's One of One tour, delivering repeatable looks across multiple cities (Image Credit: Baricci)**

impact over density.

"We weren't trying to fill every moment with movement or effects; it was more about choosing the right moments and making them hit hard."

Strong contrasts, clean looks, and carefully timed transitions formed the core visual language. Drops, emotional tracks, and key transitions were allowed to breathe, with lighting stepping forward narratively only when the music demanded it.

At a structural level, the lighting rig had to coexist with a large video wall that functioned as a dominant visual element throughout the show. Rather than positioning lighting purely as a supporting layer, the design focused on depth and spatial definition.

As Deshpande explains, "The challenge was making sure the lighting didn't get lost against the scale of the screen." The rig was therefore designed to add dimensionality and separation, allowing lighting and video to coexist without competing for attention.

## From Concept to Show File

The fully timecoded nature of the show placed significant demands on



**Pixel-driven design using Claypaky Tabora Battens and X Frame fixtures integrated with 360 degree configurations formed the visual language of the tour (Image Credit: Baricci)**

pre production. Both designers worked closely from the outset, spending time not only on creative discussions but also on refining the setlist structure, which ultimately dictated the entire cueing framework.

According to Satvinder, "We spent a lot of time listening to the music and locking the set, since the entire show was time coded and everything had to sync perfectly."

Once the music was finalised, the workflow progressed through reference building, system layouts, and cue structuring before moving into preview environments and detailed 3D visualisation. This allowed the team to anticipate spatial relationships and refine looks well before arriving on site.

On ground rehearsals were then used to fine tune timing and details, with Deshpande directing the lighting while remaining deeply involved in programming decisions.

## Adapting Without Diluting Identity

The tour encompassed a wide range of venue formats, including outdoor arenas and stadiums featuring 360 degree stage layouts. Rather than forcing a single physical design across all spaces, the team developed two distinct versions of the show.

"We built two separate time coded setups," Satvinder explains, "but the backbone of the show stayed consistent because the music didn't change."

While rig structures and layouts varied, colour palettes, cue timing, and visual rhythm remained familiar, ensuring that audiences experienced the same show identity regardless of location.

## Fixture Choices and Pixel Driven Design

The lighting system relied heavily on **Claypaky Tabora Battens** and **X Frame fixtures**, selected for their flexibility, durability, and suitability for pixel based design.

The Tabora battens established a strong vertical language across the stage, borders, and thrust areas, allowing the team to define the architectural outline of the performance space while introducing layered pixel effects.

The X Frame fixtures played a more versatile role, functioning as beam, spot, and wash units depending on the musical context. Satvinder notes a particular affinity for their optical character, saying, "I've always really liked the gobos in the X Frame, so we made sure to use that quite a bit in this show."

Pixel strobes were integrated as high impact elements, arranged differently for arena and 360 degree configurations, while lightweight Mini B washes addressed weight limitations in certain indoor venues.

## Touring Reliability and Discipline

Running a fully timecoded show places an uncompromising demand on system reliability. Precision was maintained through strict pre show protocols, redundancy planning, and disciplined system checks.

"Once everything was dialled in, it became more about maintaining that standard at every venue rather than reinventing anything on site," says Deshpande.

The touring workflow was further supported by consistent rig preparation and packaging, ensuring speed of deployment without sacrificing accuracy.

For Ground Control, One of One represents more than a single successful tour. It marks a maturation of process, technically, creatively, and operationally.

"This tour feels like a big milestone for us," Deshpande reflects. With expanded pre production capabilities and increasing reliance on offline show development, the project signals a clear direction for future large format touring in India.

As Satvinder concludes, "It's not just about doing bigger shows, but focusing on how everything ties in with the music and feels cohesive for the audience."